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SUBJECT: (U) Secretary Clinton's March 12, 2009
Conversation with Palauan President Toribiong

¶1. (U) March 12, 2009; 11:00 a.m.; Washington.

¶2. (U) Participants:

U.S.
The Secretary
Joseph E. Macmanus, Executive Assistant to the Secretary
Alcy Frelick, EAP/ANP Director
Mark Bezner, Charge d'Affaires to Palau
Robert Wood, Acting Spokesman
Paul Neville, EAP/ANP (notetaker)

Republic of Palau
President Johnson Toribiong
Sandra S. Pierantozzi, Minister of State
Hersey Kyota, Ambassador to the United States
Stuart Beck, Permanent Representative to the UN
Regina K. Mesebeluu, Senator

¶3. (U) Summary. In a March 12 meeting, President Toribiong reaffirmed the importance of U.S.-Palau relations, pressed for early USG action to review the Compact of Free Association, and requested Washington assign a resident ambassador in Palau. The Secretary assured Toribiong the Department would work quickly to review the Compact and expressed appreciation for Palau's support. End Summary.

¶4. (U) In a March 12 meeting, President of Palau Johnson Toribiong conveyed his government's commitment to a close relationship with the United States and pressed for the USG to begin the legally-mandated 15-year review of the Compact of Free Association. Noting the importance of the United States to Palau's development, Toribiong requested an extension of Compact provisions that provide financial support and U.S. federal programs and services to Palau to the end of FY2010. He welcomed the assignment of Alcy Frelick as the lead USG interagency coordinator of the review and said he had appointed Joshua Koshiba to lead the review for Palau. Toribiong also requested the United States appoint a resident ambassador to Palau.

¶5. (U) The Secretary replied that the Department would carefully review the Compact and move on it quickly. She conveyed appreciation for Palau's loyalty and support, specifically thanking Palau for voting with the United States on key issues at the UN and for recognizing Kosovo. She also noted the large number of Palauans serving in the U.S. military.

CLINTON